

State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)

1900 Williams Street - P.O. Box 4789

Helena, MT 59604-4789

Telephone: (406) 841-3911 Fax: (406) 841-3966

Situation Report for August 13, 2007

(issued @ 1500 hrs.)



2007 FIRES

Report Includes:

- Background Information
 - Fire Restrictions & Closures
 - Air Quality
 - Road Closures/Travel Restrictions
- Current Incident Situation
- New Large Fires
- Weather
- State Declarations
- Local & Tribal Declarations
- Local Government & Tribal Emergency Operations
- Requests for State Financial Assistance
- Fire Management Assistance Grants
- EMAC Resources Committed
- Summary of State Resources Committed

Important Websites:

State of Montana Fire Information:

<http://mt.gov/fire.asp>

National Interagency Fire Center

http://www.nifc.gov/fire_info/nfn.htm

Northern Rockies Coordination Center

<http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/>

I. Background Information

Since June, hot and dry weather has dominated the region creating very high to extreme fire conditions. Fire Indices are at an all time high while fuel moistures are low. Accompanying the high indices are weather patterns that have set the conditions for lightning and lightning caused starts. High pressure weather patterns over the region are responsible for the high temperatures and little to no moisture. Occasional cold fronts push through the region causing severe lightning storms that ignite wildfires. Rain has accompanied some of these fronts but a return to a high pressure system mitigates any moisture that fell.

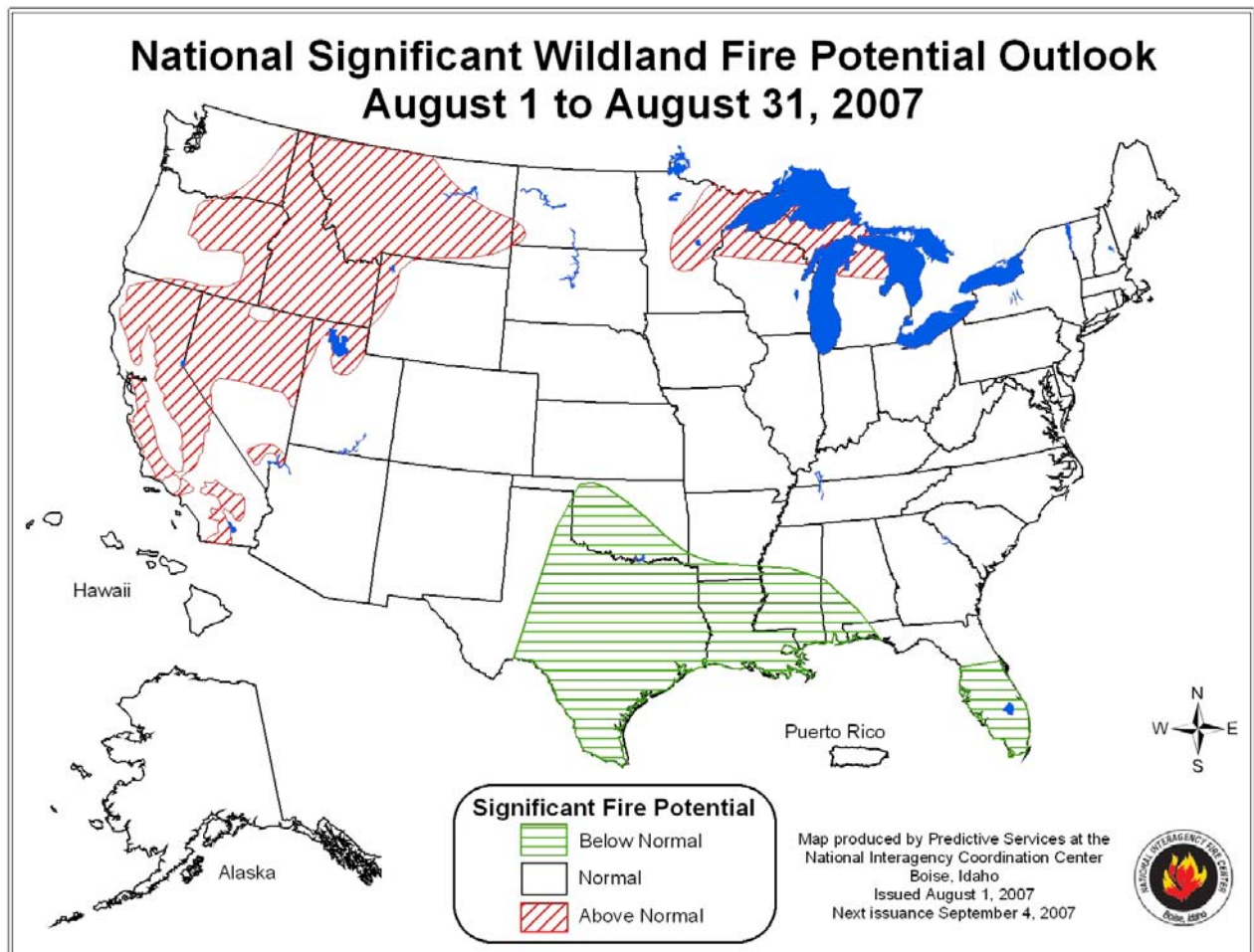
The current forecast is that significant fire potential in August is expected to be higher than normal over the western and northern Great Basin, portions of the Northwest, Montana, California, and the western and central Great Lakes. Fire potential is expected to remain elevated with potential into the fall in southern California, eastern Montana, the Great Lakes area and the southern Appalachians.

The most critical factors influencing fire potential this outlook period are:

- Hotter than normal weather across the West, including record setting heat across Montana and portions of the northern Great Basin. Combined with a very dry July

from southern California to Idaho and Montana, the result is above normal fire potential across much of the West.

- Drought has intensified over much of the intermountain West.
- Monsoon moisture will generate lightning over much of the West. However, this will provide relief in the form of showers and higher relative humidity over the southern Great Basin, Colorado and the Southwest.
- Above normal spring and early summer rainfall in eastern Montana has led to abundant fine fuel loading which may lead to an active fire season early this fall.



Inquiries regarding contracting fire equipment and other fire resources should be directed to the interested party's local dispatch center or Geographic Area Coordination Center see: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/fire/nrcq/agree-contract/signup.html>

Fire Restrictions & Closures: Portions of the state are currently under Stage I or Stage II Fire Restrictions. For definitions of these restrictions, see:

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stagel.pdf>

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stagell.pdf>

Fire Restrictions in Effect (for specific areas):

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/index.html>

Air Quality & Smoke: The Montana Department of Environmental Quality issues a daily forecast and discussion of potential smoke impacts throughout the state. The forecast can be accessed at <http://www.deq.state.mt.us/fireupdates/index.asp>.

Road Closures & Travel Restrictions: <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/reports/alerts.shtml>

Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks

[Current Fire Restrictions](#)

[Drought & Fire Updates](#)

[Drought & Fire News](#)

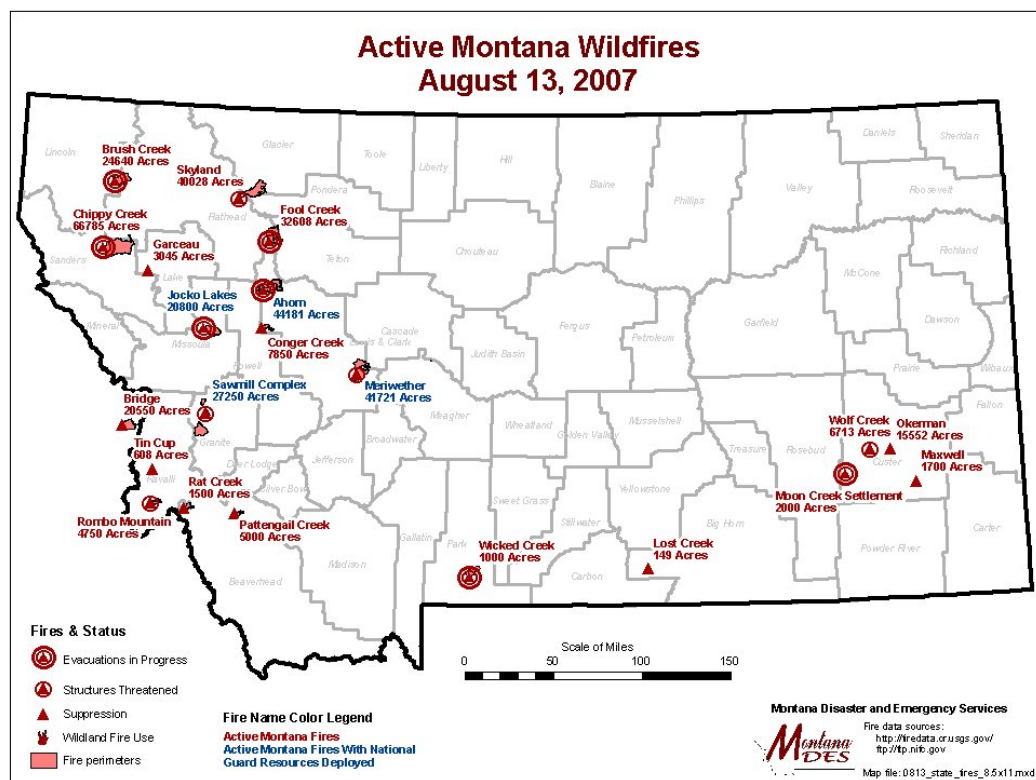
Department of Revenue

<http://mt.gov/revenue/forindividuals/taxrelieffordisaster.asp>

Department of Agriculture

<http://agr.mt.gov/crops/hayFirst.asp>

II. Current Incident Situation - Incidents listed according to current NRCG priority. *(This report includes summary information for Montana fires that are currently greater than 100 acres in size. Fires are being dropped from this report once they reach 100% containment)*



The Northern Rockies Coordination Center (Missoula) has assigned an Area Command Team (Zimmerman) to help analyze assessments for long duration fires and emerging incidents.

There are currently 5 Type I Teams, 1 Type 1 Team has been mobilized, 3 Type 2 Teams and one Fire Use Team assigned to incidents in Montana. One additional Type 2 team has been ordered for the Powder River Complex.

Jocko Lakes started on the CSKT lands (Flathead Agency, BIA), twenty-six miles NE of Missoula; 8 miles W of Seeley Lake. Wilcox's Type 1 IMT is in command of the incident. The Jocko Lakes Fire is 20,800 acres and containment was not reported. Personnel assigned: 676. Cause: Lightning. Community of Seeley Lake, surrounding area, Pyramid Lumber Mill and cell tower are threatened. Evacuations of residents and campgrounds remain in effect. Portions of the residents who were allowed to return, we re-evacuated yesterday. Traffic restrictions are in effect for HWY 83 between Clearwater Junction to Summit. Recreational activities on area lakes are restricted. An American Red Cross Shelter is open in Bonner. Structures (8) have been lost.

A **Fire Information Hotline** has been established at the Missoula County Fire Information Call Center from **9:00 am to 9:00 pm** at: **(406)258-3680**. **A 24 hour recorded message can be found at (406) 258-4271.**

Chippy Creek, is located forty-two miles southwest of Kalispell, and 24 miles N of Thompson Falls, MT (Northwestern Land Office, Montana DNRC). Raley's Type 2 IMT is transferring command to Bennett's Type 1 IMT today. Size is 66,785 acres and is 30% contained. Personnel assigned: 524. Cause: Under Investigation. Numerous homes remain threatened. Evacuations remain in effect for Hubbart Reservoir and Niarada. The evacuation for the north portion of Lonepine was lifted last night. Area closures of Mill Creek, Basso, Big Rock, Chippy and Bear Creek drainages remain in effect as well as near by roads.

Skyland is located on the Flathead NF near Summit. Pendleton's Type 1 IMT is assigned. Fire is 40,028 acre with 56% containment. Fire has burned about 9,496 acres on the Blackfeet Nation. Personnel assigned: 880. Cause: Lightning. Two structures are confirmed lost. Numerous residences in the Highway 2 Corridor remain threatened. Campgrounds and trail closures remain in effect. Evacuations are in effect for residential area between Two Medicine Creek and Little Badger (Blackfeet Reservation). Evacuation notices have been issued for East Glacier. Temporary restrictions for HWY 2 (speed limit) remain in effect. Continue structure protection.

Sawmill Complex is located on the Lolo NF. The complex includes a total of 27,250 acres with 10% containment and consists of the Sawmill Creek, the Wyman #2, and the Fisher Point fires. Heintz's Type 2 IMT is assigned. WMZ (Turman) T2 IMT has been ordered to replace Heintz's IMT. Personnel assigned: 567. Cause: Lightning. Numerous residences and other structures remain to be threatened. Restrictions are in effect for hiking, camping and fishing within the closed section of Rock Creek drainage. Road closures for parts of Rock Creek Road are in effect. Holding community meetings to brief local ranchers and

home owners of the fire situation.

Brush Creek is located on the Flathead NF, twenty-five miles west of Whitefish, MT. Brush Creek is 24,640 acres with 43% containment. Koehler's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Personnel assigned: 492. Cause: Lightning. Residences and outbuildings remain threatened. Good Creek community may be evacuated if the fire continues growing.

Rombo Mountain is located in the Bitterroot NF. Eighteen miles south of Darby, MT. Svalberg's Fire Use Management Team is assigned. Estimated size is 4,750 acres with 0% containment. Personnel assigned: 164. Cause: Lightning. Residences, Painted Rocks State Park and other commercial property remain threatened. Precautionary evacuation notices (stage 1) have been issued. Area closures remain in effect for areas around Rombo Mountain and W of West Fork Road.

Wicked Creek - This fire is located 27 miles S of Livingston, and 10 miles SE of Emigrant, MT. Size is estimated at 1,000 acres with 0% containment. Type 3 IC (Fry) is assigned. Stanich's Type 1 IMT has been ordered, they are being in-briefed tonight. Personnel Assigned: 25. Cause: Lightning. Evacuations are in place for Mill Creek. Structures are threatened. Mill Creek Road is closed at Snowbank Campground. Forest closures are in effect.

Fool Creek on the Lewis and Clark and Flathead National Forests in Lewis and Clark County, approximately 30 miles NW of Choteau. Fire is now 32,608 acres with 0% containment. Personnel assigned: 137. Cause: Lightning. Larsen's Type III Team is assigned. Several outbuildings, including a ski resort remain threaten. Evacuations and road closures remain in effect. Structure protection plans are implemented on the structures in Massey Tract, 7 Lazy P Ranch and Teton Pass Ski Area.

Ahorn Fire on the Lewis and Clark National Forest in Lewis and Clark County is being managed by Whitney's Type 1 Team. Current size is estimated at 44,181 acres and is 6% contained. Personnel Assigned: 325. Cause: Lightning. Residences and guest ranches remain threatened. Evacuation of the Benchmark area and road closure for Beaver Willow Road remains in effect.

A Joint Fire Information Center has been established for the fires in the Bob Marshall Complex. Their phone number is 1-866 831-7450. They are staffed from 0700 – 2100 hours.

Meriwether located on the Helena National Forest in and around the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness. Oltrogge's Type 1 IMT's is managing this fire. Current size is estimated at 41,721 acres with 75% containment. Personnel Assigned: 320. Cause: Lightning. Residences, outbuildings and power lines remain threatened.

Maxwell is fifty miles southeast of Miles City, MT. The Maxwell Fire is 1,700 acres and 90% contained. Type 4 IC is assigned. Personnel Assigned: 49. Cause: Lightning. Timber and grass. Spotting and torching.

***Moon Creek Settlement** is 25 miles southwest of Miles City. Personnel assigned: 64. Cause: Under Investigation. The Moon Creek Settlement Fire is 2,000 acres and is 15%

contained. Extreme wind-driven fire activity. Structures threatened. Evacuations in effect. An American Red Cross evacuation shelter was opened in Miles City at the Miles City Community College yesterday.

Wolf Creek is fifty miles southeast of Miles City, MT. The Wolf Creek Fire is 6,713 acres and 75% contained. Reduction in acreage due to more accurate mapping. A Type 3 IC is assigned. Personnel assigned: 45. Cause: Lighting. Timber and grass. Spotting, running, and torching. Structures threatened.

Conger Creek on the Lolo National Forest, 20 miles north of Ovando. The fire is 7,850 acres with 0% containment. Type 3 Incident Organization. 13 outbuildings are threatened. Personnel Assigned: 7. Cause: Lightning. The Conger Creek Fire is moving south to southeast toward Falls Point Lookout.

***Rat Creek** on the Beaverhead/Deerlodge NF. Twenty five miles west of Wisdom, MT. Kaage's IMT 2 will be in-briefing today. The Rat Creek Fire is 1,500 acres and is 0% contained. Personnel assigned: 24. Cause: Lightning. Timber. Sustained crown fire with long-range spotting. Area closure for the Tie Creek and Placer Creek road systems.

Pattengail Creek on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF. 10 miles NE of Wisdom. The Pattengail Creek Fire is 5,000 acres and 20% contained. Type 3 Incident Organization. Personnel assigned: 70. Cause: Lightning. No structures threatened.

Garceau is located on the Flathead Indian Reservation, 11 miles SW of Polson, MT. Morigeau's Type 3 IMT is assigned. The fire is now 3,045 acres and 97% contained. Personnel assigned: 30. Cause: Lightning. No structures threatened. Satellite imagery indicated increased fire activity yesterday (within containment lines).

Lost Creek Fire is located on the Crow Reservation, approximately 6 miles SE of Pryor, MT. The fire is currently 149 acres, with 40% containment. A Type 3 Incident Management organization is in place. Personnel assigned: 132.

Okerman is sixteen miles south of Miles City MT. The Okerman Fire is 15,552 acres and 100% contained. Type 4 IC is assigned. Personnel Assigned: 11. Cause: Lightning. Timber and grass. Active fire in grass and sagebrush. Structures threatened.

Tin Cup is 4 miles west of Darby. Kaage's Type 2 IMT is being re-assigned to the Rat Creek Incident. The Tin Cup Fire is 608 acres and 100% contained. Personnel assigned: 306. Cause: Under Investigation.

****Hicks Fire along the Boulder River caused the evacuation of the Boulder River corridor, including 4 Church Camps, campgrounds and residences. The Hicks Park Fire is estimated to have burned between 1,500-2,000 acres as of last night. An American Red Cross shelter was opened in Big Timber last night. We are still getting intelligence on this fire.***

****Powder River Complex in Powder River and Custer Counties. A Type 2 IMT has been ordered. We are still getting intelligence on these fires.***

* **NEW FIRES** (Emerging Extended Attack Fires over 100 acres in size)

III. Weather

Red Flag Warnings or Fire Weather Watches:

No watches and warnings have been issued today.

Definitions of a Fire Weather Watch and a Red Flag Warning:

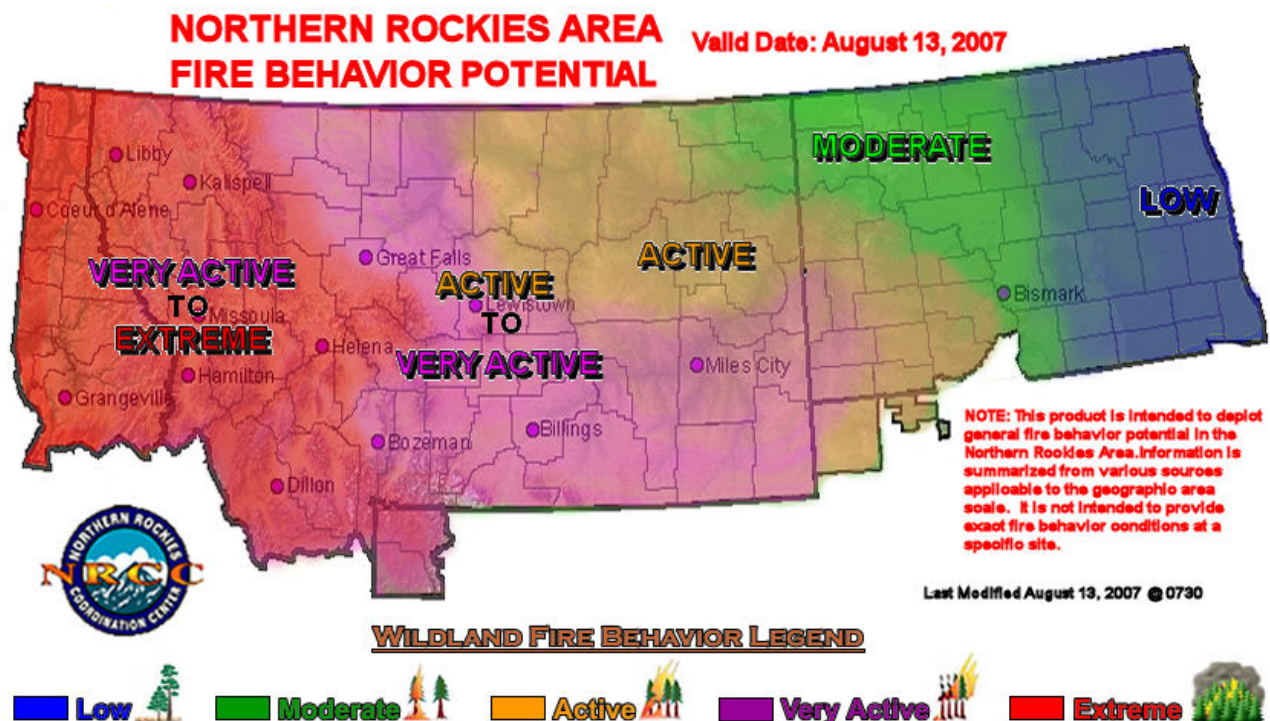
A fire weather watch or red flag warning is issued when the combination of dry fuels and weather conditions support extreme fire danger. These products are written for land and fire managers to highlight the increased fire danger.

A fire weather watch is issued up to 72 hours before the above conditions are expected to occur.

A red flag warning is issued when the conditions above are occurring or expected to occur within the next 24 hours. <http://www.weather.gov/>

Weather Forecast For current Fire Weather Predictions, see the Daily Outlook at:
http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/daily_outlook.pdf

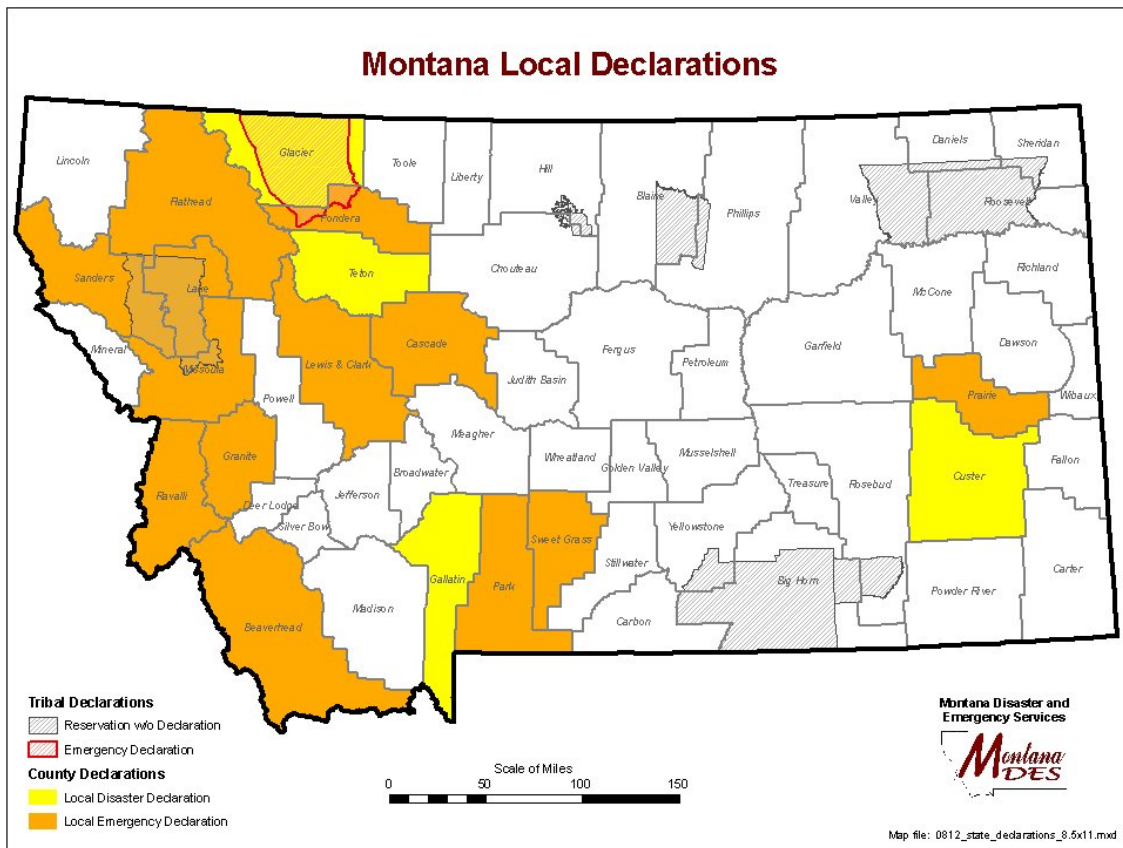
Fire Behavior Forecast For current Fire Behavior Predictions, see:
http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/fire_behavior/fire_behavior.pdf



IV. State Declarations

- Statewide Declaration of a Wildland Fire Emergency

V. Local and Tribal Declarations



- **State of Emergency.** The following jurisdictions have declared a state of emergency:

Lewis and Clark
Lake
Cascade
Flathead
Prairie
Pondera
Sweet Grass

Ravalli
Granite
Missoula
Sanders
Beaverhead
Blackfeet Nation
Park

- **Disaster Declaration.** The following jurisdictions have declared a wildfire disaster:

Teton
Glacier

Gallatin
Custer

VI. Jurisdictional Emergency Operations

- The Lewis and Clark County Emergency Operation Center was activated on July 19, 2007.
- The Blackfeet Nation has activated and staffed their Emergency Operations Center (7/30/07).
- The Glacier County Emergency Operations Center was activated on July 30, 2007. (Glacier Co. EOC is actually co-located with the Blackfeet Nation's EOC.)
- The Flathead County Emergency Operations Center was activated on August 2, 2007.
- The Teton County Emergency Operations Center was activated on August 2, 2007.
- The Pondera County Emergency Operations Center was partially activated on August 2, 2007.
- The Missoula County Emergency Operations Center is activated. Missoula County has put a call center in place for public information. The phone number is 406-258-3680.
- The Ravalli County Emergency Operations Center has been activated as of 8/6/07.
- The Granite County Emergency Operations Center has been activated.
- The Sander County Emergency Operations Center is activated but mobile in the area of the Chippy Creek Fire.
- The Custer County Emergency Operations Center was activated on 8/12/07.
- The Sweet Grass County Emergency Operations Center was activated on 8/12/07.

VII. Requests for State Financial Assistance

- N/A

VIII. Fire Management Assistance Grants

- Jocko Lakes FEMA-2718FM-MT approved 8/4/07

IX. Emergency Management Assistance Compact Resources Committed

- EMAC A Team is assigned to the MT State Emergency Coordination Center.
- Two HEMTT aviation refuelers from Colorado National Guard to support the Montana Army National Guard have arrived in Helena.

X. Summary of State Resources Committed (through the SECC)

- MT-DES currently has two employees deployed with Incident Management Teams (through the Northern Rockies Coordination Center).
- MT-DES has deployed an Agency Representative to the Blackfeet Indian Reservation Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
- Montana Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk modules have been deployed for initial attack to:

- Kalispell
 - Missoula
 - Helena
- One Montana Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook and module has been deployed to assist Oltrogge's Type 1 Team with fire support on the Meriwether Fire.
- Montana Army National Guard Security Teams (28 personnel each) have been assigned to:
 - Meriwether Fire
 - Sawmill Complex
 - Jocko Lake (2 teams)
 - Fool Creek Fire
- Montana Highway Patrol resources are assigned (as requested) to assist in traffic control and law enforcement support of large fires.
- Starting on July 20, 2007, at 0700 the SECC was staffed and activated to a Level III status with extended hours (0700-1900), seven days a week. The SECC remains at Level III. Outside of those hours, the MT DES staff Duty Officer is available 24 hrs and may be reached at (406) 841-3911.